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The Amen Corner AND OTHER POEMS

DAVID H. SCHOCK



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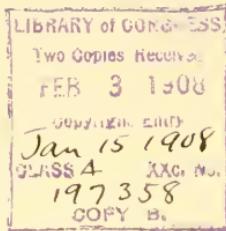
The Amen Corner
AND
OTHER VERSES



BY
DAVID H. SCHOCK



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Of

The New Jersey Annual Conference,

By

The Author.

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THE AMEN CORNER

How shall the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks?—Paul.

PART FIRST

1

In a church retired, in a quiet wood,
—We old folks were young folks then—
On either hand where the pulpit stood,
Was a corner we called the Amen.
Sleepy Hollow, the frivolous said,
Heavenly Rest, said some,
But what's in a name? through sun or shade
You would see the old folks come,
At morn or eve of the Holy Day,
And quietly entering, then,
Would bow their heads in the Amen Corner,
And softly say Amen.

2.

The Local Preacher always sat
At the end of the forward pew.
His red bandanna, and white cravat,
Distinguished in the view.
Albeit, a worthy man, well tried,
Obedient to his call,
His office duly magnified
As saith Apostle Paul, . . .
Nor loth to exercise his gifts,
He beamed with unction when
He was holding forth, and the Amen Corner
Responding in full Amen.

3

There was the old Class Leader too,
 Of countenance benign.
 Unlearned in many things—he knew
 The Book of Lore Divine.
 A burning and a shining light,
 No feeble flickering ray.
 His counsel guided each aright,
 His life led on the way.
 There with his little faithful band,
 In holy converse, then
 That morning class in the Amen Corner,
 Claimed birthright in Amen.

4

We smiled sometimes at these good old folks,
 Who dressed so quaint and queer.
 Mothers in Israel, in shawls and pokes,
 Fathers in old odd gear
 And fashion, adrift from the days of yore.
 We called Aunt Sallie, Antique.
 No gold, gems, ribbons, nor feathers galore,
 Adorned their persons meek ;
 A lowly mind—in plain attire,
 They deemed more fitting, when,
 They met there, in the Amen Corner
 To worship the Lord, Amen.

5

He giveth to his beloved sleep,
 As of old the Psalmist said.
 So should the sermon be somewhat deep
 Or tame, they might nod the head.

Or if the weather was very hot,
And the atmosphere impure,
The drowsy sexton having forgot
To unbar a window or door ;
But, when the preacher was all on hand,
And shook himself loose again,
They'd wake with a start in the Amen Corner,
And shout Amen, Amen.

6

They feared not the urchin's godless mirth,
Nor scorn of the Pharisee,
The pride of the rich and great of earth,
Nor cultured dignity.
They had no fear of aught save sin,
But kept them true and pure,
While faith, hope, charity, went in
As they passed through the door,
Seeking to get near God by faith,
To touch his garment's hem,
In that holy place, the Amen Corner,
To worship and say Amen.

7

Supremely blest, old ill or poor,
They seemed while waiting there.
In every gospel sermon, sure
To get the largest share.
They fed on manna, on angel's food,
And wines upon the lees.
In pastures green, where waters flowed,
They lingered at their ease.

And talked with God, whose saving grace
Was magnified in them.
It was Beulah land, that Amen Corner,
And vocal with Amen.

8

Then when the great revival came,
And backsliders were restored ;
When lagging saints were put to shame,
While children praised the Lord ;
When awful fears on sinners fell,
And gave them trouble sore,
Because the bitter pains of hell,
Gat hold of them once more ;
When dews of grace fell all around
Refreshing many, why then,
It was Pentecost in the Amen Corner,
Hallelujah to God, Amen.

PART SECOND

I

But that queer corner is vacant now,
No voices echo there.
We look in vain for that peaceful brow,
For her with the silvered hair,
For a tall lithe form, much bent and thin,
For him with trembling pace,
For our spinster sister prim and trim,
For a calm pale angel face ;
They have vanished there, and the place is bare
Of these holy women and men,

They meet no more in the Amen Corner,
To unite in their glad Amen.

2

They have gone up there
Where the angels are,
And souls of the justified.
Their lamps were trim,
They entered in,
The Bridegroom with the Bride.
They stand among
The unnumbered throng
Before the great I Am,
And help prolong
The mighty song
Of Moses and the Lamb ;
On each clear brow
Is shining now
The victor's diadem.
But silent is the Amen Corner,
And the pew never says Amen.

3

They moved the old church
From its ancient seat,
Converting it into a hall.
Where the minstrels meet,
And the new elite,
Give their annual charity ball.
They built another, the modern kind,
Of marble, brick, and granite,

13

A splendid church as you may find
On this old-fashioned planet.
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,"
Peals from its silvery bells.
The "Gloria in excelsis" now,
A full-voiced organ swells.
A surpliced choir, a smart quartette,
Doth magnify the Lord.
And somewhat of a sermonette
Essays the Sacred Word.
A holy incense fills the air,
A mild religious gloom
Pervades the congregation there,
In silence like the tomb.
Brisk dapper ushers wait to bow,
Each sinner, saint or mourner,
To his own pew—they own them now—
There is no Amen Corner;
Memorial windows blaze intense,
Recording life's brief story,
—Of the old folks—who, departing hence
Were received up into glory.
They praised on earth, they sing on high,
Nor may we hear again,
Their glad refrain from the Amen Corner,
That long-lost chord Amen.

Thus many things have passed away,
Which we shall see no more,

While ofttimes, better things than they,
Have been kept back in store.
But "dumb with silence"—Oh how drear
The voiceless tents of Shem.
I think with Paul, I'd rather hear
An Amen now and then.
Will He who made the blind to see,
Give dumb lips speech again?
Then pulpit, pew, and Amen Corner
Shall unite in one glad Amen.

MEMORIAL DAY

The daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephtha.—*Judges*.

1

With muffled step we muster here,
Where rest the nation's honored dead.
While memory with a silent tear,
Hallows the earth above their head.

2

We place upon each quiet breast,
That flag for which they fought, and won,
Who marched at Freedom's high behest,
Nor halted till the work was done.

3

That flag they rescued, stripe nor star
Was wanting, where they conquering stood,
Though round it raged fraternal war,
And swords were stained with brothers' blood.

4

"Ground arms," they heard the Captain call,
"Lights out," the bugles echoed clear.
Now mustered out, brave comrades, all
In dreamless silence bivouac here.

5

Long years have fled since these have died,
But on the Old Flag waving there,
How the bright stars have multiplied,
Stars for their crown, increasing fair.

GOOD FRIDAY

God be merciful to me a sinner.—The Publican.

1

Lord at thy feet with guilt weighed down,
I penitently bow.
It was my hand which placed the crown
In scorn upon thy brow.

2

It was my sin, which caused thy shame,
Thy sorrow, pain and loss,
Which brought reproach upon thy name,
And sent thee to the cross.

3

O meekly-suffering Lamb of God
(Who gave thy life, to prove
By nail and thorn, by spear and rod,
The measure of his love).

4

I see thy sorrow, hear thy moan,
Thy soul-despairing cry.
Will God his only Son disown,
Forsake and let thee die?

5

Pray that from me my dying Lord,
God's mercy be not hid;
"Father forgive"—repeat that word—
I knew not what he did.

That love which saved the dying thief,
Who helpless, turned to thee,
Can cleanse my sin, bring peace relief,
Jesus remember me.

What guilt of man, what love divine,
What gracious mystery,
Conspire upon that cross of thine
Which thou didst bear for me.

EASTER

Declared to be the the Son of God in power, by the resurrection from the dead.—Paul.

1

Come see the place where your dear Lord is laid,
Near by the cross stained with His dreadful
wound.

In anxious haste, while falls the evening shade,
With myrrh in linen white, His limbs are bound.
A stranger's tomb receives the homeless one,
This Man of Sorrows smitten with our grief,
Bearing our sinful burden as His own,
Until the shameful cross brought His relief.
He lived despised
Rejected by His own,
He died, they lay Him down
On earth's rude heart of stone.

2

Come see the place where your dear Lord hath
lain,
A holy company is gathering near.
The scattered flock, their faithful Shepherd slain,
Return as timid lambs, to fold in fear.
They came with spices, at the opening day,
They saw in silent wonder through the dawn,
The broken seal, the great stone rolled away,
The open sepulchre, the Master gone;

And where His head had lain
And where His feet,
Two white-robed angels bowed,
Over the mercy seat.

3

"Come see the place" where once they lay His head.

Then quickly go, to His disciples say,
Why seek ye the living Christ among the dead?
He goes before you into Galilee,
There shall ye see him. Thus the angel spake.

Thou "Son of God in power," death's splendid foe,
Who died, arose, ascended for our sake,
Go thou before us wheresoe'er we go,
Through life, through death,
So may we follow on,
And come safe home at last,
Where thou thyself hast gone.

EASTER

He is not here, for He is risen.—The Angel.

1

Bring the fresh flowers, this joyful Easter morn,
When at the open tomb with songs you meet.
Let them no longer droop, of light forlorn,
But raise their heads, their risen Lord to greet.
The night is past, the long night of the tomb,
Which did the Sun of Righteousness eclipse,
Leaving the world in deeper, sadder gloom,
Now let the flowers open their glad lips,
And pour their fragrance forth in odor sweet,
—These sinless Magdalenes—around their
Master's feet.

2

Bring spicy branch of cassia balm and myrrh,
Yielding the holy oil an incense pure;
Rich scented sprays of cedar, pine and fir,
And amaranths which, fadeless all, endure;
The victor palm, its broad leaf proudly borne,
The valley lily, through spring meadows strown,
The rose of Sharon, with its blood stained thorn,
Blushing for crime and shame, but not its own,
Bring all the flowers from garden, wood or plain,
To strew His pathway back to life again.

3

Three days, three nights, love driven by despair,
Sought Him through all the earth, but sought in
vain,

She turned her steps toward heaven, nor was He
there,

Nor to be found in all the vast domain,
Where angels dwell, where God, where men abide.

Self-exiled, he had fled the realm of life,
Had swiftly passed, beyond the Stygian tide,
Fainting with many wounds, in mortal strife,
Down to the under-world, in pain and moan,
Where death held sway and claimed him for
its own.

4

There sin enthroned, exulted as He came,

But seeing all the wounds her hands had made,
Which brought Him thither, fled in endless pain,

Death followed swift, with every horrid shade.
So flies the night before the dawning morn,

So shadows perish when the substance dies,
So of despair triumphant hope was born,

And through the tombhope's whispered echo
flies,

Christ came, Christ conquered, rose from death
and pain,

And we in Him also shall rise again.

5

Go then, sweet flowers, from the vacant tomb,

—Blest Mary's—sent to dry the mourner's tears.
And evermore with spring's returning bloom,

Repeat the tidings down the coming years,
Message of life from death have ye been made,

Rising from earth's dark mould where Christ
was laid.

EVENING HYMN

1

Hear us from thy throne O Father,
Chanting low our vesper song.
As the twilight shadows gather,
Into night, dark lone and long.

2

Father of lights that knows no turning,
Guard us safe from every ill,
Till the night is gone, and morning,
Finds thee our protector still.

3

Pardon Lord our faults through weakness,
Guilt of every sin efface,
Penitence bestow, with meekness,
We beseech thee of thy grace.

4

God of mercy, be thou ever,
With us on the way we go.
Hope and strength for life's endeavor,
Steadfast friend in joy or woe.

A PRAYER

1

Father Almighty, resplendent in glory,
Whom cherub, archangel and seraph adore,
Here at thy footstool, low-bending before thee,
We supplicants come, thy favor implore.

2

From everlasting unto everlasting
Thou art Jehovah, eternal thy sway.
Swift as the shadows our brief lives are passing,
As flowers, that flourish and fade in a day.

3

Like as a father, may thy loving-kindness
Pity thy children, frail offspring of dust,
Present, in weakness in sorrow and blindness,
May thy rich mercy and love, be our trust.

4

Send us thy light, give us strength for life's duty,
Breathe on us peace, and confirm us in love,
Till we beholding the King in his beauty,
Perfectly serve in the temple above.

AGNUS DEI

1

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
Through thine all atoning blood
Freely are we justified,
Sinless who for sinners died.

2

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
Thou this path of life hast trod,
Guide our wayward feet aright,
Let thy pure life be our light.

3

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
With protecting staff and rod,
Faithful Shepherd, all thy sheep
From the fierce destroyer keep.

4

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
Thou didst enter that abode
Where death reigned—and gloomy hell—
All their fearful powers to quell.

5

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
Like a mighty victor rode,
Bringing trophies of the strife,
Immortality and life.

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
To His Father's high abode,
Thou ascended, to prepare
For His own a mansion there.

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
On the church didst send abroad
Tongues of fire, the Holy Ghost,
On the day of Pentecost.

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God.
To thy pure bright blest abode,
Bring us with the holy throng,
Thee to praise in the new song.

CHRISTMAS

Isaiah 9. 6.

1

"Unto us a child is born
Unto us a Son is given."
Hail the long expected morn,
Hail the First-born Prince of Peace.

2

See Him in the manger laid.
What fond hopes, what glad surmise,
Thrill the gentle mother-maid,
Bending low with wondering eyes.

3

Shepherds leave their silent folds,
Eager haste to Bethlehem,
While the angels' anthem rolls,
"Peace on earth, good will to men."

4

Wizards, wandering from afar,
Have their weary journey made,
Guided by the lonely star,
To the place where He is laid.

5

Wizard, shepherd, angel, star,
Gather at the holy place;
Rapt in awe, transported are,
Gazing on that infant face.

They their gifts before Him spread,
 Lay them lowly at His feet,
 And with bowed uncovered head,
 Pay their homage which is meet.

Have we nothing here to bring,
 Myrrh nor frankincense nor gold,
 Tribute to the new born King,
 No return for love untold ?

Praise ye then with mighty voice,
 Praise with timbrel, harp and lute ;
 While the hosts of heaven rejoice,
 Shall the lips of man be mute ?

Bring your hearts ye sons of earth,
 Lay them on His holy shrine,
 So, within, a higher birth,
 May transform them all divine.

In the likeness of your Lord,
 God's own well beloved Son.
 Enter, thou incarnate Word,
 And the gracious work is done.

PEACE ON EARTH

1

When will the nations realize,
That peace on earth, good will to men ?
Angel-evangel from the skies,
O'er Bethlehem.

2

Will peace indeed come down from God,
To dwell with man and ne'er depart ?
Will righteousness make its abode,
His ruined heart ?

3

When righteousness shall fill the soul,
Full as the ocean's swelling tide,
Then peace will like a river roll,
And still abide.

4

Rise, Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Earth from her night of sin release,
Bring forth on brighter morning skies,
Thy bow of peace.

A MOSAIC

Isaiah 11. 1-9.

1

A little child shall lead them, said
The Prophet, as the Spirit led,
To speak of Him whose kingly birth,
Should bring God's reign upon the earth.
He came, the Son of God, divine,
The prince, of David's royal line.

2

From lowly crib a babe's soft eyes,
Gazed on the heavens above ;
When, from the ever watchful skies,
Came messengers of love,
Over the plains of Bethlehem,
An angel throng
Whose choral song
Was peace on earth, good will to men.

He beckoned with his tiny hand
By infant strength upreared ;
When in a far off Eastern land,
The new born star appeared,
Which came and stood o'er Bethlehem
And all the night,
In splendor bright
Shed peace on earth, good will to men.

He uttered but one plaintive cry,
And wise men far away,

Took up their gifts, and drawing nigh
To where the young child lay,
In swaddling clothes in Bethlehem.

Bowed at the name
Of Him who came
With peace on earth, good will to men.

Glad hearted shepherds leave their fold,
By angel message thrilled,
That God's great purpose from of old,
Has surely been fulfilled,
In David's house in Bethlehem,
That on His throne
God sets His Son
For peace on earth, good will to men.
Child led, they followed, found, adored.
A Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

3

His scepter from the hand of God
Received, He lifts the royal rod
High over all, till wrong shall cease.
And right forevermore increase
In His name, lowly at His feet,
His reign omnipotent complete,
All knees shall bow, all tongues confess,
The Lord, the King of righteousness.
The wolf, the lion, leopard, bear,
Which make the human heart their lair ;
The brute in man, the savage lust,
Trailing God's Image in the dust ;

The cockatrice whose fang is death,
Asp double tongued, with venom'd breath ;
Chicane and smooth hypocrisies,
The serpent coil of splendid lies ;
Pride, greed, oppression, envy, hate,
Survivals of a meaner state,
He comes to smite with righteous breath,
Rod of his mouth whose stroke is death,
To slay the earthly sensual,
And rescue from the ancient thrall,
To purify the sons of men,
Nor blush to call them brethren.

4

He comes, his Spirit to impart
To every contrite willing heart.

Spirit of counsel, knowledge, power,
And wisdom, in the crucial hour,
That man as God, may know to choose
The good, the evil to refuse.

Spirit of Light, a radiance
Within the soul, dispersing thence
Shadows long ages old, a ray
That shineth unto perfect day.

Spirit of Life, the breath of God,
To vivify the sensuous clod,
And bring forth, from the dust of earth,
The nobler manhood to its birth.

Man was in God, God was in man.
 In Christ, both reconciled in one,
 The first-fruit of a primal plan,
 And purpose, through all ages run,
 And ever toward the goal, that here
 Might rise at last a perfect seed,
 Conform to Christ, his image bear,
 In wish and word, in will and deed.

And Deity became a child,
 Teaching that we must children be,
 Holy and harmless, undefiled,
 And meek and lowly, such as he.
 That these alone the kingdom know,
 Or enter and its fullness share.
 How high God's mansions—but how low
 The gate, through which we enter there.

Beneath Jehovah's mountain
 Sweet waters have their birth,
 A full unfailing fountain
 Of healing for the earth.
 Bringing release from sadness,
 Respite from war and strife,
 For guilt a song of gladness,
 In righteousness of life.

God's holy hill of Zion
 No evil shall annoy.

No ravening beast, no lion
Shall come there to destroy,
But lamb and bear together
Shall lie down in accord
For earth shall be
From sea to sea
The garden of the Lord.

THE REDBIRD

Behold the fowls of the air—
Your Heavenly Father feedeth them—
Are ye not much better than they?—Jesus.

1

It is winter's morn
And the snow lies deep,
From the ragged thorn
I can hear a cheep,
And a song, which blend
In the frosty air,
'Tis my Redbird friend,
Pert debonair.

2

High on the bough
Of the leafless tree,
He is standing now
In his topmost glee.
The keen wind stings,
He lifts his crest,
And whistles and sings
His very best.

3

Oh a careless chap
Is the Redbird free,
With his crimson cap
In the icy tree.
The snow may drive
Through the shrieking air,

He will sing and thrive
On his perch up there.

4

Man goes with his head
Like a bulrush bowed,
By night to his bed,
By day with the crowd.
The Redbird spareth
Himself, and sings,
This Gallio careth
For none of these things.

5

He will break his fast
On the scattered seeds,
Which fall with the blast
From the wind swept weeds.
In his scarlet dress
Rich bright and trim,
Prince nor princess
Is robed like him.

6

To-day there's enough
To eat and to wear.
To-morrow's far off
He borrows no care.
But sings to the sky
His cheerful glee,
The Father on high
He careth for me.

THE CROCUS

The fullness of Him that filleth all in all.—Paul.

1

Herald of spring, and first-born of the year,
Brave little flower, that dares the frost to face,
Prophet of hope, that bids me not to fear,
How bright, how holy, thou hast made this place.

2

Thy presence makes an altar of this sward ;
Thy opened petals are a lowly shrine,
Wherein appears the glory of the Lord,
Transforming thee into a thing divine.

3

In pillard cloud and fire, in parted sea,
In burning bush, God's presence we confess,
And He has made this little flower to be,
His tabernacle in the wilderness.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE MAN IN THE MOON

1

The jolly old Man in the Moon,
Went courting a daughter of Mars,
Went sailing off in his balloon,
 Beyond all the beautiful stars ;
His face round and fat,
His hair combed down flat,
But in his excitement forgetting his hat.

2

Then all the old maids in the sky
 Got jealous as ever could be,
And opened a mischievous eye
 When this strange adventure they see ;
And said, we will rout
This luny old lout,
In half a jiffy, we'll hustle him out.

3

So, Miss Venus the lovely and fair,
 Miss Cassiopea the grand,
Berenice with bright tangled hair,
 Miss Virgo persuasive and bland,
Got the Dragon, and Lion,
And mighty Orion,
To help them to send off the crazy man flying.

4

Got the Great Bear, the Little Bear too,
 Aquarius and Archer, as well

As the whole of the Zodiac crew,
To pursue him with hooting and yell;
And when the Great Crab,
For his man made a grab,
Ah! you should have heard how he let out his gab.

5

Then old Mother Earth and her Sun,
Took part in this wonderful race,
And added some spice to the fun.
While chasing the Moon to his place,
For the Earth slyly slips
Round the Sun in her trips,
And smuttet his face wtth a total eclipse.

6

Henceforth this good Man in the Moon,
Stays home with his Luna quite well.
Looks down on all lovers who spoon,
And smiles at the lies which they tell.
And says, now my rule
Is to keep calm, and cool,
So save all my quarters, and halves, and get full.

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